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Illinois Joins Poison Centers Nationwide to Highlight the Dangers of Poisonings and How to Reduce Risk, Injury

*Illinois Poison Center to Participate in National Poison Prevention Week
March 16th - 22nd*

CHICAGO – The Illinois Poison Center (IPC), the nation’s oldest poison center, joins poison centers around the country to raise awareness about poison dangers and educate the public on ways to further protect their loved ones during National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW), which runs from March 16th – 22nd. This year’s theme is “When the unexpected happens, Poison Help is here for you.” For more than 70 years, poison centers have provided vital information and resources to families to help reduce the threat of poisoning and save lives.

“Poison risks remain a constant threat to individuals of all ages,” says IPC Medical Director Michael Wahl, M.D. “Our team of pharmacists, nurses, and poison information experts are available 24/7 to answer questions, offer guidance on treatment, and help prevent harm. No concern is too big or too small, and all calls are free and confidential.”

In 2024, IPC handled 72,500 cases involving potentially harmful substances, ranging from minor to severe. In fact, approximately one-third of IPC’s poison calls come directly from healthcare professionals on behalf of their patients, seeking additional guidance about treatment plans related to harmful exposures such as overdoses, medication errors or adverse reactions, plants, household chemicals, automotive products, insect stings, lead, carbon monoxide and more.

Children are especially vulnerable to choking or accidental ingestions, but adults are also at risk. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](https://www.cdc.gov)), poisoning—including drug overdoses and carbon monoxide—was the leading cause of injury-related death in the United States, surpassing motor vehicle traffic deaths and firearms combined.

Resources can be found at <https://www.illinoispoisoncenter.org/resources>, and include:

- “My Child Ate...” [guide](#);
- A complimentary safety packet featuring a sticker, magnet and first aid tips for poisonings;
- A video library; and
- Blog posts tackling urgent, trending and seasonal topics.

The [American Association of Poison Control Centers](#) recognizes [National Poison Prevention Week from March 16-22](#). March is also Illinois Poison Prevention Month.

IPC encourages the public to participate in Illinois Poison Prevention Week by:

- Sharing IPC's website (<https://www.illinoispoisoncenter.org>) with friends and family;
- Completing IPC's free online Poison Prevention Education Course (available in both English and Spanish) [here](#);
- Ordering [free materials](#) for IPPM/NPPW: pill organizers, children's paint sheets, safety packets, stickers, magnets, etc.;
- Posting on social media using #NPPW25; and
- Raising awareness about IPC's toll-free, confidential expert helpline service (800-222-1222)

IPC's toxicology specialists, who serve most all languages, resolve over 90% of poison exposure cases over the phone, eliminating the need for referral to a healthcare facility or transport. Calls to the IPC helpline (1-800-222-1222) are free and confidential. IPC experts are available to provide information and treatment advice 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, including holidays.

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The Illinois Poison Center is a nonprofit health service that provides the people of Illinois with comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances via a free, confidential 24-hour helpline staffed by physicians, pharmacists and nurses.